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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, August 4, 2003

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## **Patterson's Public Act 91 of 2002 in Full Motion** *Uniformed Voting System on Its Way*

**LANSING** – The optical scan voting system, which was announced today by Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, will give Michigan voters more assurance in the state's voting system, said Sen. Bruce Patterson (R – Canton).

"I am delighted to play such an integral role in Michigan's voting reform," Patterson stated, the author of Public Act (PA) 91 of 2002. "Updating Michigan's voting technology with a uniformed voting system will prove to be efficient, effective, and reliable for all voters and election workers."

PA 91 of 2002 requires the acquisition of a uniformed voting system once funds are made available and appropriated by the Legislature. PA 39 of 2003 allocated the appropriate funds.

Land selected the optical scan voting system after careful consideration by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was implemented through PA 91 of 2002. This committee involves representation from all levels - county, city, township and other relevant organizations. They worked with State legislators on the selection process.

PA 91 of 2002 also mandates counties, cities, villages, townships, school districts must be informed of the Advisory Committee's selection and that the Secretary of State then construct a schedule. This schedule details the timeframe in which the uniform voting system must be implemented.

In addition, PA 91 specifies that electronic tabulating equipment must be located at each polling place. This was decided to detect spoiled ballots. If a voter's choices have exceeded the number of choices the voter is entitled to make, the system will detect the spoiled ballot. Not only will the spoiled ballot be detected, but the system is programmed to reject it. The voter then has the opportunity to recast his or her ballot.

"Detecting ballot spoilage is a crucial part of the uniformed voting system," Patterson stated. "It secures that democracy is protected. Every vote cast will count as the voter intended."

Currently, Michigan uses five different voting methods, some within the same county. However, the optical scan voting system is the most widely used system in Michigan.

**(More)**

- **Optical scan system** – a voter colors in an oval or connects an arrow on a paper ballot.
- **Direct recording electronic (DRE)** – a voter touches a screen or presses a button on a machine.
- **Punch cards** – a voter uses a punching tool to punch holes in a card. This method is where the hanging “chad” was born.
- **Mechanical level systems** – a voter turns down levers to indicate candidate choices and then operates a release lever to record the votes.
- And the **paper ballot** – a voter puts a check mark or an “X” in a square or circle.

When the bill was introduced (House Bill 5216), Patterson was the chair of the House Elections and Redistricting Committee. He held a series of 15 hearings on election reform and three hearings on this particular bill. The committee heard from a wide range of individuals from both sides of the table. Candice Miller, the Secretary of the State at the time, the chair of the Democratic Party, as well as scores of individuals expressed their views. Elected officials and clerks from across the state willing shared with the committee what they liked and what they would change with the bill.

House Bill 5216 was signed by former Gov. John Engler on April 9, 2002.